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Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Security—in the Breach

No high-level diplomat from Secretary of State George Shultz on down has yet noted that the seduction of Marine guards in Moscow is an almost exact replay of what happened in the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw in 1959, with both seductions compromising U.S. national security.

That suggests the crazy diplomatic sloppiness over security that endangered our country 28 years ago was forgotten almost as soon as it happened. At issue here is not the Marines so much as the oversight they need but did not get from diplomatic security officers.

Beyond that, the insistence of every secretary of state since the Nixon administration in clinging to the nightmarish deal on new embassies for the United States and the Soviet Union has finally ignited into the roaring Soviet scandal carefully kept under cover all these years.

The embassy deal imperils U.S. state secrets here because the new Soviet Embassy sits on a hilltop, ideal position for electronic penetration of the White House, CIA and other government offices. It also exposes U.S. secrets in Moscow because the new embassy was constructed under Soviet, not U.S., supervision. The woodwork reeks with sensors and electronic bugs.

But unlike the new Soviet Embassy here, ours in Moscow endangers no Kremlin secrets. It sits in a swampy Moscow lowland, the worst of all locations for conducting electronic espionage.

After years on the back burner, this unequal treaty on the home away from home has suddenly erupted into headlines, as it should have more than a decade ago. The exchange gave the Soviets the doughnut, the United States the hole. So brazen have Soviet operations become in our new embassy that FBI Director William Webster privately informed the White House months ago that the United State probably should never take possession.

The result is a diplomatic watershed for George Shultz. Although totally innocent in the doughnut-for-hole embassy deal arranged 15 years ago, he knows the present U.S. Embassy is now so penetrated by electronic devices, partly thanks to lack of supervision over the Marine guards, that he cannot talk openly there. His words would flow straight to the KGB.

One top-rank former diplomat says privately that Shultz should insist that his mid-April arms control talks be held outside the Soviet Union.

Whatever importance the secretary attaches to his new round of arms control talks, notifying his hosts that the United States will not tolerate such uncivilized behavior should have a higher diplomatic priority today.

The great Marine seduction of 1959 was revealed to the United States by an underground Polish intelligence officer who defected to the United States. Five years later, a report to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee from the State Department's Bureau of Security told the bare bones of what had happened:

"There was a problem at the Warsaw Embassy which was brought to light in 1959. It was first revealed to the Department by the defector [Michal] Goleniewski. A number of U.S. employees, including Marine guards, were implicated."

In his book "The Ordeal of Otto Otepka"—about the then controversial State Department security officer—William J. Gill wrote in words that could be lifted from today's newspapers: "The Marine guards . . . had simply proved easy prey for the girls, all prostitutes on the secret police payroll, who made the embassy their headquarters, coming and going virtually at will. The defector reported that the girls had turned

over valuable embassy documents to their Communist masters."

But criminal prosecutions never resulted. The State Department simply reported to Congress in April 1964, in an unsigned memorandum, that the Marines "were disciplined and returned to the United States."

As for embassy officials, the memorandum said that only in a "single case . . . was there reason to believe that an officer of the Embassy staff may have been implicated in espionage. The individual was discharged. . . . [T]here was insufficient legal evidence to support criminal proceedings against the suspected individual." In addition, it said "the behavior of some [other] employees was sufficiently questionable to warrant letters of reprimand which will seriously impair their future in the U.S. Government."

Maybe so. But the department's reprimands were not sufficient to "seriously impair" the repeat performance that has put George Shultz so woefully on the defensive. Needed now is no mere reprimand, but a full-scale exposure of Soviet practices, whatever the impact on arms control, followed by an investigation and a crackdown that would echo far into the future.

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